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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION, SOVEREIGNTY, FOREIGN RELATIONS; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution, Iraqi Sovereignty, and Foreign Relations were the major editorial themes of the daily newspapers on September 25, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
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[1A.](#) "Civil Disobedience"  
(As-Sabah, independent, published this second-page editorial by Sa'eed Abdul Hadi)

"A collection of Sunni groups from Iraq met in Amman and claimed that if military operations in Al-Anbar province do not cease, they will issue a declaration for civil disobedience in the province. The participants also confirmed that they would attempt to gather five million signatures to reject the constitution. It seems that they have two contradictory statements: they want to collect five million signatures to reject the constitution and, at the same time, they demand that security forces not attack terrorist havens in Ramadi and its suburbs. This call suggests that they want to protect those seeking to murder Iraqi people.

"I think if Ramadi were safe, stable, and not under the control of terrorists, we would see this meeting held in Al-Anbar province, rather than Amman. Participants in the Amman meeting know that Ramadi is controlled by terrorists-the same terrorists who prevented Al-Anbar's citizens from voting and freely expressing their opinions.

"Those participants in Amman are encouraging Iraqis in southern and central Iraq to establish their own federal territories because the Shiites have become targets in Al-Anbar and surrounding areas. Iraqis must not remain silent while their people are being killed. We must put an end to terror in Al-Anbar and we must kick those killers out of Iraqi cities. Those who met in Amman did not care about Al-Anbar; they have ulterior motives. To those who convened in Amman, I would like to say: we know that the unity of Iraq is in danger because you want to kill those who participate in the political process and you want to force Iraqis to implement your agenda."

[1B.](#) "Who Apologizes to Whom?"  
(Ad-Dustoor, independent, pro-coalition, no bias, secular, published this first-page editorial by Bassim Al-Sheikh, editor of the newspaper)

"The incident in Basra between British troops and Iraqi police reflects the nature of the relationship between the Iraqi government and occupation forces in Iraq. It revealed conspiracies that occupation forces are planning against the Iraqi nation.

"British troops freed their two soldiers from Iraqi custody after storming a police station flying an Iraqi flag, representing Iraqi sovereignty in Basra. Both soldiers were wearing religious uniforms and carrying weapons, claiming that they were on an intelligence mission when Iraqi police officers confronted them. This is the British version of the event, but it is clear that no one believes their claims because an intelligence mission would not be conducted in such a way.

"How can they explain why they attacked the police station when the first priority of the Iraqi police is maintaining security in the city? More than one hundred suspects, gang leaders, and terrorists escaped from prison during the attack. We wonder if there were other ways to solve this crisis. Maybe the British do not want to forget that they

are occupation forces who do not respect the authority of Iraqi law and the elected Iraqi government.

"What makes matters worse is that British troops are demanding an official apology from the Iraqi government because the British claim that the two soldiers were handed over to militiamen by rogue elements of the Basra police force. This would be an additional insult to the elected Iraqi government; the occupiers are demanding an apology from the Iraqi government for fighting terrorism and securing the streets in Basra. We hope that our government will reject the request and declare that they will not cooperate with British troops until there is an apology from the British government."

**1C. "Towards More-Developed Arab Relationships"**

(Al-Bayyan, affiliated with the Islamic Dawa Party, led by Al-Ja'afari, no bias, published this front-page unattributed editorial)

"The Iraqi political spectrum is still reacting to Saudi Foreign Minister Saud Al-Faisal's recent statements, in which he criticized U.S. policy for selling Iraq to Iran. In fact, we did not expect our Arab brothers in Saudi Arabia would have this view of the Iraqi situation. This opinion tyrannizes the Iraqi people. How can the Iraqi people accept subjection to Iran while they refuse American guardianship? Such statements indicate that there is a large gap between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. They also indicate a misunderstanding of Iraqi issues. This is because Arab diplomatic representation is absent in Iraq--Arab states use indirect routes to address Iraq.

"We reproach our Saudi brothers because they took an uneven and indirect path to convey their views to us. They should have communicated directly with their Iraqi brothers given the close geographic proximity between Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Why did they insist on expressing their opinion in front of the Americans? It is distressing when our brothers go to Washington every time they want to discuss an Iraqi issue, as if Washington were Iraq's guardian.

"Iraq always calls for strengthening its relationships with Arab countries and it is eager to have an Arab presence in Baghdad. But, unfortunately, we see that our Arab brothers insist on creating a large gap between themselves and Iraq. Those Arab countries refuse to listen to their Iraqi brothers and listen only to those who have nothing to do with Iraqi affairs.

"We hope that our brothers in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries will seriously support the political project in Iraq and work harder to eliminate terror in Iraq that comes from Arab countries. We do not want them to go to others to discuss our issues; we want them to discuss our affairs with us. We hope they will participate actively in developing Iraq. Iraq works hard to establish close relationships with Arab countries and they must work harder to reciprocate."

**1D. "Actual Attitude"**

(Al-Adala, daily, no bias, affiliated with Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim, published this page-three editorial by Dr. Ali Kholaiif)

"Some sides are releasing sensational statements that do not take into account actual conditions in Iraq nor the potential consequences of those conditions. Self-expression is a warranted right, but it should depend on the solid foundation of fact, rather than assumption or theoretical reason. All sides agreed that this constitution is the best that Iraqis can produce at this stage. That does not mean it is insignificant. The truth that every one should proclaim is: Iraqi people belong to different sects; each with its own demands and each trying to insert them in the constitution. But it is not possible to put all these demands in the constitution because some of them are will be rejected by others. Since the constitution depends on compromise, each sect should be willing to make concessions to satisfy all constituents.

"Political blocks and national forces conceded demands because they believe that if a sect insisted on having all its demands met, the constitution would never be drafted. Unfortunately, there are some sides insisting that all of their demands be met at the expense of others. While some relinquished many of their demands, other parties introduced new demands as soon as old ones were met. Why do they create new restrictions on the constitution? This constitution can be modified by the subsequent National Assembly. People say they will have strong representation in the next Assembly and the electoral system will enable all Iraqis to be represented. Based on these facts, there is no problem in voting for the constitution, as there is a law that allows modification of some articles in the future. If we reject the constitution, there will be no guarantee that a future draft will satisfy all Iraqis.

"It is logical that all the political entities who play essential roles in the political process support the

constitution-even those regarded as objectors. Instead of silence, they need to show the positive results of voting for the constitution, rather than leaving their people to follow those who reject democracy in Iraq. All sides in the political process should support the constitution because it is a necessary step at this stage of Iraq's political process."

**E. "Dialogue with a Bullet"**

(Al-Fourat, independent, anti coalition, published this last page editorial by Amjad Tawfeek)

"The majority of coalition troops (or occupational forces) are American and British due to their numbers, roles, and activities. I am not discussing American or British democracy; they are both models for western democracies around the whole world. But we wonder how much Iraq has gained from American and British democracy since the end of the war.

"When the war started, American cruise missiles, fighter jet missiles, tanks, and other heavy weaponry destroyed our country and killed Iraqis. Then their soldiers arrived and deployed all over Iraq-from South to North. This is war, one might say. We have to sacrifice because democracy is coming. Then what? More months of death for our people and new mass graves opened for innocent Iraqis.

"We do not want to discuss American and British democracy. But there is no such thing as a democratic fighter jet or a dictatorial fighter jet! No democratic tank or dictatorial tank; no oppressive bullet or merciful bullet. They are tools for one purpose: killing.

"Military personnel in large combat vehicles should not be distributing candy to children; fighter jets cannot distribute vaccinations to Iraqi children. The bullet is always used to kill. Iraqi lands and Iraqi people have the solution. We should start to fight, using the power of the bullet to solve our crisis. This is the truth and every one knows it."

**F. "We Are Writing Our Constitution"**

(Al-Taakhi, affiliated with the KDP, pro-coalition, published this page-four editorial by Muhammad Al-Badri)

"It is really astounding when people on Iraqi streets talk about the constitution-even children have started to ask their parents about this issue that dwells in everyone's mind. Some support it, others reject it, but rejection comes only from those who do not want security for their country. The Iraqi people are very good at discussing these matters, and the constitution has an essential role in securing the rights of all constituents of this country.

"Iraq endured more than forty years with a temporary constitution that consisted of mere ink on paper. The government was oppressive: it would push anyone who discussed the subject into mass graves .

"Today there is a chance for free expression. Iraqis have the right to opine about all articles of the constitution, to study it closely and then discuss it. It pertains to Iraqi lives and the future of their children; furthermore, it is the roadmap to social, economic, political, and legal structure. This structure is necessary after living in disorder and oppression for so long.

"In order for this constitution to be representative of the opinions, ideas, and perspectives of Iraqis, it should be set by them, for they know their country best and they are the constituents. Non-Iraqis should not interfere in constitutional drafting; as the proverb says: the people of Mecca know their country best. Iraqis alone have the right to write their constitution after living a hell of successive regimes that marginalized the Kurds and others since 1921.

"Today, Iraqis are the only ones who have the right to draft their constitution according to their free will, provided that it ensures the rights of all constituents. The others should not intervene, for the Iraqis-the inventors of the first alphabet-are capable of writing their own constitution."

KHALILZAD